

Personal history and reading by 70 year old white female, Huntsville, Texas (Transcription)

W2 Side A Begin M3 A(2)

Q. Tell me a brief history about your son again. I wished I had gone ahead and started tape recording at the beginning.

A. Well, I'll just say this is <unintelligible text>, my one and only child. And when he finished high school we had always planned to send him to Princeton, but his father had been called back into the service as a reserve officer and was stationed in Washington, so we decided to send him to the Citadel Military College in Charleston, South Carolina. At Christmas they were beginning to draft these 17-year-old boys, and his father was going overseas and he said he wanted <unintelligible text> to be trained before he went. And so he got an appointment to West Point and he entered West Point at 17 years of age and graduated in the three-year course.

Q. That's marvelous.

A. <unintelligible text> He chose to enter the Air Corps and at one time he served 3 years in Japan right up on that northern part where had we needed to send people into Russia <gap> he would have been one of the first to go, you see, he was kept on standby. And at one time he was the youngest jet pilot in the world; and after the war was over, and he came home he decided he wanted to study law. So he went to Texas University Law School and was when he graduated it was with the highest honors of any law student that had ever been there, really, and he was the honor graduate of the world in law Now,

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here's my little nostalgia corner right here; that tells a lot about my background. This is my wedding picture and that is an old family servant named <unintelligible text> and she worked for my grandmother and there were, let's see, about four <unintelligible text> families in Huntsville and Ann would so everywhere there was a house party in the whole connection, on a new baby, or a wedding <gap> the night I was married I <gap> reception. She says to my mother: I wish I could have my picture taken <gap> and mama said: come right along and she posed that way herself.

Q. That's marvelous.

A. And this is my husband <taken?> at that time. You know he was acting president of the school up here when he was called back into the service. And those are our wedding flowers up there <gap> his boutonniere and flowers from my bouquet, so you see how sentimental I am, and here's a picture of my son, rather recent picture, and that's his namesake

Q. You can certainly see that he has a fine look about him that you can see in there in both pictures.

A. <gap> made that portrait in Dallas; this is a copy of it. When we left, when he retired 10 years ago, they wanted to give us a gift and I said oh no I don't want <gap> and I don't want anybody giving us a present and they

said: Well, would you let us <unintelligible text> to keep <gap> There's a man in Dallas, an artist who takes pictures of these <gap> ours is a copy; they have the original and it's in a much more beautiful frame <gap> This is my mother and my father at the time we were married. I had the most wonderful time.

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Q. You told me that they built this home for you.

A. Yes, yes, yes; it was a wedding gift. This is my father when he was a young man and and this is my mother with my older sister and this is me and I was always high spoiled. <gap> piece of candy they gave me in my hand and then in here, this is <gap> study and I think <gap> and those are the signatures of the entire faculty and those are kind of the little memorials <gap> And then I tell you more about this <gap> 2 years ago <gap> to the Court of <gap> Appeals and he was doing beautifully in this old law firm office. But he was quite entranced with the idea of the service to his country and that was taken actually when he was sworn in by George Greenhill of the Texas Supreme Court who was a personal friend and I won't take too long with all this cause

Q. Take all the time you want; this is marvelous.

A. These are the pictures when we were young. That's my child when he was 2 years old, ain't he beautiful?

Q. He is; he's a beautiful baby.

A. <gap> and I'm the biggest sissy in the world which has caused some problems...

Q. Well, wasn't he your pride and joy? Look at that!

A. <gap> the sweetest child; everybody said so. He was just joy itself. Then this is my husband, my son, and my oldest grandson, <unintelligible text>. This is my son and his father there in the picture.

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Q. That's a very good picture down there.

A. Yeah, I think so.

Q. Uh huh. It's got very nice color.

A. This is my favorite photograph. Mr. <unintelligible text> came down here and he said Miss let me <gap> I said Mr. <gap> I'm too old. And I said when <gap> went overseas in 1945, I had this picture made and <unintelligible text> and that was my last picture

Q. That's a beautiful picture.

A. And so, and then this is my favorite picture of Tommy when he was five those are his baby shoes. . .

Q. Does he have blue eyes?

A. No. Yes! Yes, he does have blue eyes, what am I thinking about, blue eyes.

Q. Cause that's a whiter white but you can tell

A. Yes, he has blue eyes.

Q. He's got such a beautiful fair look.

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A. I always wished I had them. These are his baby shoes. And this shows how sentimental I am; there's his boy announcement that Tiffany made and I have this little so I put the heart by it. And that's a little picture of me in my wedding dress. Let's see, <gap> talking about burning electricity. . . <gap> They said so much about it. Anyway, I like <gap> This is my mother, a portrait of her when she was, I may be talking to loud...

Q. No, no, that's fine.

A. And that's my granddaughter, I won't go into much of this. This is a picture of my son <gap> made that 2 years ago, I guess, and they made pictures of him in his judge's robes to hang up in the Gibbs office, and this is his <unintelligible text> when he was little, isn't he darling?

Q. Yes.

A. Did you ever hear of Philip Gibbs, do you know Mrs. Philip Gibbs?

Q. That is the Gibbs that is in the history of the town?

A. Well, <unintelligible text> is about 10 years older than Tommy, and he was a Yale graduate and during the war he was in the Air Force and he died 2 years ago with cancer, but he was a great favorite of mine, and his family brought this picture to me after he died. Wasn't he a darling + handsome?

Q. Umm.

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A. And let's see. This is my great-granddaughter.

Q. Who is this very nice-looking young lady, right here?

A. <gap> this little girl when she was six years old, Jennifer, my grand-daughter.

Q. She's a beautiful young lady.

A. Oh, she's a darling girl. Well now, let's see: Now I have a great many interesting things upstairs. Would you like to see them?

Q. I would love to see it all. If you don't mind?

A. No, I've been married over 50 years and I'm still an old maid. Now this is another portrait. That portrait hangs in the bank over here and also up in the Gibbs

<gap> I felt so grateful. Those are my grandchildren's last toys at my house. That's another sentimental gesture. This is a bedroom, as you can see, and this a dresser was in my grandmother's family. Oh, I just don't know how old it is, and this is a big bed and table I bought to with that dresser <gap> She was married to my father's older brother. She was from Jackson, Mississippi, a very fine family and I loved her and that's her picture.

Q. If I remember correctly from what I read, this is one of the first settlers that came in, right?

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A. Yes, yes.

Q. They originally settled in Knoxville.

A. Yes, my family did. <gap> and his brother <unintelligible text> <gap> Now, this is my Victorian room. This is a bed that was in my grandmother's home for years and years, too. And this is a chest of drawers that was <gap> This I love, of course it is a picture of my grandmother Gibbs, she was a remarkable woman, and that miniature is of her husband. So it gives my son a picture of the two of them together. <gap> and this is Tommy. He was flying out in West Texas.

Q. He was a very young pilot, wasn't he?

A. Oh, he was. He was the youngest jet pilot

Q. How old was he at that time, do you know?

A. Well, if he finished West Point, he must have been 20.

Q. That is marvelous to be a pilot at that age.

A. <gap> This is an old table that's been in our house and it was such a small room, but it has a good closet, so it makes an adequate weekend bedroom for one of my grandchildren. <gap> This is my room. I love it because it's so big. <gap> These <gap> figurines from the West Point gift shop, when Tommy was up there. That's my father

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<gap> I love that; he was a wonderful man. He's all Tommy, of course, <gap> went he was 13 years old.

Q. He has that look, that same look in all the pictures.

A. He's a <unintelligible text>. He's named for my father. But his father's had a fine interest all his life. <gap> He is a <unintelligible text>. <gap> This was taken in <gap> in <gap> When we went up there when Tommy ended school private Buckingham school up there for a year when he was 6 years old <gap> did graduate work at Harvard <gap> and <gap> made those pictures of us

there. When we was there.

Q. That was very nice.

A. <gap> This has been in the family a long time. That's another <unintelligible text> bonnet bed.

Q. Now, what would you call this unit here?

A. This is what you call a wardrobe.

Q. With that big mirror on it; that is so beautiful.

A. <gap> to match it, and it belonged to my aunt in Houston, and and she gave it to <unintelligible text> family <gap> and when I came home, do you what it said <gap> and

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Ed helped get this house supervised <gap> We did the whole thing over, and I came down here to see about it <gap> and she said Ms. G. you need another closet in this room. And he said there's a wardrobe up in the <unintelligible text> house; it was closed then and Phillip said he would just love for you to have it and said let's go up there and look, so we did and Phillip gave me this. It was <gap> idea; he thought about it.

Q. That is certainly nice.

A. Well, Al he had trouble with his back since the war.

Q. And that is an orthopedic type mattress.

A. <gap> It has a contraption underneath; you can raise and lower it electrically and I just got so tired of trying for extra pillows, so we moved back here Gibbs made this bed extra long, and we got a <gap> mattress, and they supplied <gap> and he <gap> enjoys it; he just doesn't want to sleep anywhere else except in his bed. Well, I guess that's about all

Q. It certainly has been nice. You have so much history here.

A. Well, its just family. I tell you something I had done. Since <gap> Robinson and I were very close, he was my oldest first cousin, and he died almost 3 years ago, no he died 2 years ago <gap> seems like forever, and we were very close; and after he died <gap> something went out of my life, really. We were just like a brother and sister. And all I do now mostly, I just do what I want to do. I not a club person and I'll put out this light <gap>

Q. That's a melodia.

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A. It's a melodia.

Q. Well, I've never seen one of those before.

A. And these are the real old ivory keys, you see?

Q. Yes. That is quite a little piece there.

A. Yes, I love it. And it's rosewood.

Q. And it's got a full keyboard on it. Looks really nice.

A. Yes.

Q. And this little stool is darling.

A. Yes, I found that in an antique shop to go with these sofas. <gap> and I like very simple lines <gap> made these sofas. They're copied from a sofa in the White House. They're a copy. And that is an English <gap> that Aunt Mary gave me, Phillip's mother. Well, suppose you come out here and <gap>

Q. He looks like a movie star person here, doesn't he?

A. Yeah, yeah. They tried to make him look like that. This is a picture of my whole family

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Q. White <Cable?> was the name of <gap>

A. White

Q. When was this torn down?

A. Well, after my mother died which was in 1950; and we hated to do it but you know we all had our homes and we couldn't bear the thought of doing anything with it like apartments, anything to keep it up; and we just didn't want anybody else to live in it.

Q. Yes.

A. And we took it down and <gap> father was a lawyer in South Carolina; and his mother came from a very fine family in Virginia

Q. Well that is very nice.

A. Well you <unintelligible text> We'd go to my grandmother's house on Christmas night and her house was perfectly beautiful. It was ornate, but it wasn't too ornate and she had this enormous reception hall. It was as big as all this part of my house and <unintelligible text> there were two double parlors that opened into the dining room, and in the front parlor she always had a christmas tree great big with presents for all of us. And then in those days it was really just like the old South and we had just a lot of excellent servants and we had such a fine relationship

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with Aunt Louisa, you know that was typical; and Louis, the man who milked the cows and then he would drive put on a tall hat and drive my mother's carriage. It was just like the old South.

Q. Ah, that must have been nice.

A. And on Christmas night they would serve a 2-course supper to everybody, all of us; and <gap> Robinson and I used to get together and sit on the stairs where we could watch all of it together, you know when I was at that age, and at the top of this hallway there was a cut out place with lights <unintelligible text> just made a brilliant scene. It was just wonderful; it was just like they used to do in olden times.

Q. I would give anything to be able to see that and be a part of that.

A. You just don't know what it means to me. And I was telling somebody recently about I think we had the most wonderful Christmases as a child, and I can so well remember on Christmas Eve night, oh it was a great time, and mama would have us all get our baths and get dressed for supper; and my parents were into all that with us. Then we went up to the Methodist Church and that was before they had this church, but they had a beautiful small red brick church. And we would gather all the town, the Methodists would gather there; and the most beautiful Christmas trees they had. And all the women of the church would dress dolls for their little girls. It was just like a big family; and you never did know Dr. Thomason, but you've seen John Thomason's room <gap> Well, he had a marvelous father, Dr. Thomason, he was a school superintendent; and he was always <gap> and he would read <unintelligible text> and all our eyes, you know, would get big stars and he would say: Here's another <gap> he's arriving. And about that time, we'd hear sleigh bells and here would come Santa Claus in this red suit now with his bag over his shoulder and

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give out all these toys. And then one of the most interesting things as I look back, after that beautiful Christmas church service, we would come home over here to this house, my family and my mother had gotten all these great big brown bags and enormous supply of all kinds of fruits and candy and they let us help. We fixed Christmas bags for all the servants in the family, not just ours but the man who came and did the carpentry work, things like that. We'd fix oh a dozen or more

bags and then get them ready; and on Christmas morning they would all come by and say Christmas gifts. And we had a big bag of Christmas food.

Q. That's marvelous, that's marvelous.

M3 A(2) ends